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Chair's summary statement

1. The Governments of Sierra Leone and the Netherlands, under the auspices of the United Nations, convened a high-level stakeholders consultation on Sierra Leone. The meeting brought together senior representatives of Member States, the United Nations, the private sector and civil society.

2. The primary objectives of the consultation were to garner support for the implementation of the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework, initiate new partnerships, generate support for existing peacebuilding initiatives and broaden the donor base for Sierra Leone.

3. The consultation opened with an address by the Secretary-General and statements from the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Finance and Development of Sierra Leone. Other senior representatives of the Government of Sierra Leone, the United Nations and Member States also took part in the consultation.

4. In thematic plenary sessions, participants discussed specific areas where support was required to meet the commitments contained in the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework. Challenges to forging partnerships were also explored and innovative ideas for mobilization of resources, such as the utilization of pooled funding and sector-wide strategies, were highlighted. Several stakeholders, notably Sweden, the World Bank, Japan, India, Bangladesh, the European Community, the International Parliamentary Union and the United Nations, expressed commitments to continue or increase their support to Sierra Leone in line with the Framework.

5. In particular, the consultation underscored the following points:

(a) The Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework is one of the primary engagement and partnership instruments between the Government of Sierra Leone and the international community. The commitments contained in the Framework are central to ensuring lasting and self-sustaining peace and must be implemented by the Government of Sierra Leone, the Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations, bilateral and multilateral partners and all other relevant stakeholders. In order to meet its commitments, the Government of Sierra Leone will need sustained support from diverse stakeholders, multilateral and bilateral partners and the private sector;

(b) In order to ensure greater national ownership and effectiveness of the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone, international support should to the extent possible be provided through direct budget support or through sector-wide

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programmes and multi-donor funding mechanisms. Existing multi-donor funding mechanisms, such as the Youth Employment Basket Fund, the Elections Basket Fund and the Decentralization Fund, as well as the recently proposed capacity-building fund, must be strengthened and well publicized to enable greater participation by non-resident donors;

(c) Reaffirming the ownership and leadership of the Government of Sierra Leone on aid coordination, a Sierra Leone aid coordination policy should be developed as soon as possible to ensure greater coherence and effectiveness of international assistance provided to Sierra Leone. In the context of the finalization of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2008-2010, every effort should be made to ensure linkages with the implementation of the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework and the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. Regular informal meetings between the Government of Sierra Leone and international partners could be helpful in that regard;

(d) Recognizing that youth employment and empowerment are central to peace consolidation in Sierra Leone, a prioritized, costed and coherent national youth employment and empowerment strategy should be developed under the leadership of the Government of Sierra Leone and in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. Youth employment and empowerment issues should be considered in the context of the overall economic recovery of the country, in particular the development of the agricultural and private sectors. The international actors, especially the United Nations, should provide timely and high-quality support and advice to the Government of Sierra Leone on the development and implementation of youth employment and empowerment programmes and policies;

(e) In the lead-up to the local council elections scheduled for 5 July 2008, every effort should be made to ensure that the elections are held on time and in a peaceful and fair manner. In that context, initiatives to foster greater national reconciliation, enhanced inter- and intra-party dialogue and greater participation of youth and women in the electoral process should be expanded and supported;

(f) Noting the impressive progress made in the areas of security-sector and justice-sector reform and development, in particular the recently developed Justice Sector Reform and Investment Plan 2008-2010, continued attention and follow-up is needed for the implementation of the recommendations of Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the consolidation of legal and constitutional reforms;

(g) Under the leadership of the Government of Sierra Leone, additional support is needed to broaden private/public partnerships and create an enabling environment to develop the business sector, generate domestic revenue and create wealth to ensure that Sierra Leone's peace is sustainable and irreversible;

(h) Recognizing the central role of the United Nations in supporting the Government of Sierra Leone and other stakeholders in their engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission and the implementation of the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework, every effort should be made to ensure that the United Nations system in Sierra Leone has the leadership, capacity and resources to do so effectively, especially in the context of the finalization of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2008-2010 and the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone.